

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PA-02 H-02
SSM-05 SIG-03 SS-15 SSO-00 PM-05 INR-10 NSAE-00
ACDA-12 INRE-00 /101 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

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O 180105Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
DOD
JCS
CIA
USIA
NSC

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MARCH 17

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR MARCH 17, 1978.
FYI ONLY, SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER III.

MR. CARTER: ALL RIGHT. LET ME JUST GIVE YOU A GENERAL
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RUNDOWN, RIGHT NOW, OF WHAT WE UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION
IS. I DO NOT HAVE A NEW VARIATION ON THE THEME EXPRESSED
LAST NIGHT BETWEEN 5:30 AND 6:00. WE DO UNDERSTAND THAT
BOTH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAVE
REQUESTED THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO
CONVENE A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

THIS MORNING, THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH,
ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, WITH THE ISRAELI EMBASSY,
INCLUDING A VISIT WITHIN THE LAST HOUR BY THE AMBASSADOR,
MR. DINITZ.

HE HAS ALSO BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF
THE UNITED NATIONS, MR. WALDHEIM, AND INTENDS TO BE BACK
IN TOUCH WITH HIM AGAIN THIS AFTERNOON. OUR REPRESENTA-
TIVES IN NEW YORK, AND HERE, HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MEMBERS
OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THROUGH THEIR MISSIONS IN NEW YORK,

AND WE REMAIN IN CONSTANT TOUCH IN THE FIELD -- WHICH
IS TO SAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- WITH THE VARIOUS PARTIES.

I DO NOT HAVE A PROJECTION FOR YOU OF WHEN THE
SECURITY COUNCIL MAY MEET. THERE ARE VARIOUS
LIKELIHOODS, AND I, OF COURSE, TAKE NOTE OF CONSIDERABLE
SPECULATION THAT THERE MIGHT, IN FACT, BE A MEETING THIS
AFTERNOON. I AM SIMPLY UNABLE TO GIVE AN ABSOLUTE
ASSURANCE ON A TIME, BECAUSE THAT IS STILL BEING

DISCUSSED.

Q. IS IT THE UNITED STATES' INTENTION TO INTRODUCE ANY RESOLUTIONS, OR TAKE ANY INITIATIVES IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL?

A. WE ARE ACTIVELY CONSULTING ON THAT QUESTION, AMONG OTHERS, AND I DO NOT -- BECAUSE WE DO NOT -- HAVE AN ANSWER FOR YOU RIGHT NOW ON THAT.
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Q. CAN YOU JUST SAY WHETHER THE SOVIETS ARE INCLUDED IN THE CONSULTATIONS?

A. I AM CONFIDENT THE SUBJECT WAS BROUGHT UP IN THE CONVERSATION YESTERDAY. I DO NOT KNOW, AND PROBABLY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE, IN ANY CASE, A TOTAL LIST OF THOSE COUNTRIES THAT WE HAVE BEEN TALKING TO IN NEW YORK, AND ELSEWHERE. BUT I THINK IT FOLLOWS THE LOGIC, BECAUSE THAT IS A PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

Q. YOU SAID THAT WE WERE ACTIVELY CONSULTING ON THAT QUESTION. DO YOU INCLUDE IN THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE UNITED STATES INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL?

A. I REPEAT THAT THAT IS A POSSIBILITY, AND THE REASON I CAN'T DO ANYTHING BETTER FOR YOU ON THAT IS NOT BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW, BUT BECAUSE IT HAS NOT BEEN DECIDED.

Q. WELL, IF IT IS DECIDED, WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO BRIEF, OR BE ABLE TO GIVE US SOMETHING THIS AFTERNOON ON IT?

A. I THINK THE RESOLUTION, AND OUR DECISION THERE, WILL PROBABLY PROPERLY COME OUT OF THE MISSION IN NEW YORK. I DOUBT THAT I WILL; I WOULD BE PERFECTLY HAPPY TO PROVIDE WHATEVER INFORMATION I CAN, BUT I

DON'T THINK I WILL DO A FORMAL BRIEFING.

Q. IS THERE A CONSENSUS AS YET ON THE NEED TO SET UP
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AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ON THAT SUBJECT. I AM NOT SURE THAT THERE IS CONSENSUS ON THAT APPROACH, FIRST, AND AMONG THOSE WHO MAY AGREE, WITH

THAT AS A POSSIBILITY, AS TO PRECISELY HOW IT WOULD BE CONSTRUCTED.

I THINK I WANT TO REPEAT MYSELF. I AM AS POSITIVE AS I CAN BE ABOUT ANYTHING THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF AMERICANS BEING INVOLVED IN THAT IS NOT ONE UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION.

Q. IS ONE OF THOSE PREFERRED CHOICES HERE A MIX OF AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE AND A LEBANESE ARMY UNIT, TO WHATEVER DEGREE IT EXISTS, AND THAT THIS WOULD ACCOMPLISH BOTH OF THE AIMS THAT YOU SET FORTH LAST NIGHT?

A. I HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH IT, BECAUSE I THINK THAT OUR MOST IDEAL ANSWER, OF COURSE, WOULD BE IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO IMMEDIATELY INTRODUCE THE LEBANESE FORCES INTO THAT AREA. I DO NOT THINK IT IS FORMULATED ENOUGH FOR ME TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER YOU POSITIVELY ON THIS.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL, AS I WOULD REPEAT MYSELF, OBVIOUSLY, IS THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH ITS MILITARY FORCES, EXTEND ITS CONTROL DOWN TO THE BORDER. IN THE MEANTIME, HOWEVER, HOW THE MIX WORKS IS SOMETHING THAT IS REALLY STILL TRYING TO BE WORKED OUT; WHETHER THERE IS A MIX INITIALLY.

Q. DOES INTRODUCTION OF SOME FORM OF PEACE-KEEPING FORCE REMAIN ONE OF SEVERAL OPTIONS THAT THE UNITED STATES IS EXPLORING, AS YOU WERE SAYING YESTERDAY? OR ARE YOU UNCLASSIFIED

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READY TO SAY NOW THIS IS ABOUT THE ONLY OPTION OR ARRANGEMENT FOR SOUTHERN LEBANON UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION?

A. I WOULD SAY IT IS UNDER THE MOST ACTIVE CONSIDERATION. I THINK OTHER OPTIONS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING STUDIED, PARTICULARLY AS THEY ARE PRESENTED AND AS THE DISCUSSIONS WE HAVE WITH OTHER PEOPLE GO FORWARD.

I DON'T WANT TO EXCLUDE SOMETHING, BUT I THINK THAT IS THE MOST ACTIVE.

Q. HAVE WE BEEN AS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT SYRIAN ARMY WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON AS WE ARE ABOUT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL?

A. LET ME JUST NOTE SOMETHING. I WAS ASKED A SIMILAR QUESTION LAST NIGHT AND MY REPLY REMAINS THE SAME. THERE IS THE QUESTION OF BOTH THE ACCESSION OF

THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON TO A SITUATION THAT MAKES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO.

Q. THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON WELCOMES THE SYRIAN FORCES?

A. THEY HAVE CERTAINLY GIVEN NO INDICATION THAT THEY WANT THAT ARMY OUT.

Q. WOULD WE, IF WE ARE INTERESTED IN AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE FOR SOUTH LEBANON, ALSO BE INTERESTED IN AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE FOR THOSE PARTS OF LEBANON OCCUPIED BY THE SYRIANS, OR WOULD YOUR ANSWER EQUALLY APPLY, GIVEN THAT THE SYRIANS ARE WELCOME IN UNCLASSIFIED

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LEBANON?

A. NOW, WAIT A MINUTE. LET ME REPEAT MYSELF, BECAUSE IF YOU WEREN'T LISTENING LAST NIGHT, I WANT TO TELL YOU AGAIN VERY CAREFULLY THAT THE MAJOR CONSIDERATION ON ANY ARRANGEMENT THAT IS UNDERTAKEN IN LEBANON IS THE DESIRES AND NEEDS OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. THAT IS, AFTER ALL, THEIR TERRITORY, AND THAT IS THE FIRST CONSIDERATION.

Q. HAVE WE, IN FACT, ASCERTAINED THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IS WILLING TO SEE AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE-KEEPING FORCE?

A. WE HAVE BEEN UNDER ACTIVE CONSULTATION WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, AND I AM NOT PREPARED TO SPEAK FOR THEIR NEEDS. THEY WILL, VERY SOON, HAVE A CHANCE TO SPEAK TO THAT QUESTION.

Q. DID WE ASCERTAIN, BEFORE WE BEGAN TALKING PUBLICLY ABOUT THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE-KEEPING FORCE, THAT, IN FACT, LEBANON WAS AGREEABLE TO THAT IDEA?

IDEA?

A. WE HAVE BEEN IN VERY CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

Q. I KNOW WE HAVE BEEN TALKING TO THEM, BUT DID WE GET A POSITIVE RETURN FROM IT?

A. LET ME SAY AGAIN, I AM GOING TO HAVE TO LET THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT SPEAK FOR ITSELF. I DO NOT WISH TO TRY TO DETAIL THEIR POSITION.

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Q. LAST NIGHT, IN THE STATEMENT, YOU SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES REGRETTED THE LOSS OF CIVILIAN LIVES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, AND YOU SAID AT THE BRIEFING YOU HAD REPORTS OF CIVILIAN DEATH TOLLS. DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS THE DEATH TOLL? HAVE YOU ANY IDEA HOW MANY THERE ARE?

MR. SHERMAN: I THINK THE LEBANESE RED CROSS HAS USED THE FIGURE OF 250 PEOPLE KILLED, INCLUDING CIVILIANS.

Q. WAS THAT ALSO MILITARY?

MR. SHERMAN: THAT WASN'T CLEAR.

Q. WELL, IF IT INCLUDES CIVILIANS, THEY ARE COUNTING MILITARY, TOO, IF THEY HAVE THAT.

MR. SHERMAN: THAT WAS JUST THE REPORT I SAW THAT THE TOTAL FIGURE OF PEOPLE KILLED WAS 250, WHICH INCLUDES CIVILIANS.

Q. WAS IT ALL LEBANESE THAT WERE KILLED?

MR. SHERMAN: I WOULD HAVE TO REALLY REFER TO THE LEBANESE RED CROSS ON THAT.

Q. SO, YOU DON'T HAVE A BREAKDOWN OF CIVILIAN AND MILITARY?

MR. CARTER: I DO NOT.

Q. THE WORD "EXPECT" WAS USED IN THE STATEMENT YESTERDAY ABOUT ISRAELI, AND I GUESS, IN A TORTURED READING UNCLASSIFIED

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OF IT, IT COULD BE THE EXPRESSION OF A WISH OR A HOPE. IS THERE ANY DOUBT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS ASKED ISRAEL, OR CALLED ON ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW?

A. NO.

Q. CAN YOU DO ANYTHING THAT WILL ELABORATE ON THE TIMING? DOES THE UNITED STATES WANT A PROMPT, IMMEDIATE, FAIRLY QUICK -- OR WHAT KIND OF WITHDRAWAL? CAN YOU BREAK THAT OUT AT THIS TIME?

A. I AM NOT ABLE TO GO BEYOND WHAT I DID LAST NIGHT IN THAT FAIRLY TORTUOUS EXERCISE.

Q. I WENT THROUGH MY NOTES LAST NIGHT AND I COULDN'T FIND "PROMPT, IMMEDIATE." THE "URGENT" WAS ON CONSULTATION, BUT DOES THE UNITED STATES HAVE A SENSE OF URGENCY ABOUT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL?

A. THE UNITED STATES WANTS AND EXPECTS ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW. THE UNITED STATES ALSO WANTS TO PROMOTE ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD GUARANTEE STABILITY AND SECURITY IN THE AREA. AND, I TELL YOU, I AM ON THIS LINE AND, LIKE GRANT, I GUESS I AM GOING TO HAVE TO STAY ON IT ALL SUMMER UNTIL AUTUMN COMES.

Q. WHAT WE WERE CONCENTRATING ON YESTERDAY, AS YOU KNOW, WAS THE LINK BETWEEN THE TWO. I AM TRYING NOT TO GO DOWN THAT DEAD-END AGAIN AND ASK YOU ABOUT JUST WITHDRAWAL; HOW URGENT IS THE U.S. EXPECTATION?

A. LET ME SAY A COUPLE OF THINGS, BECAUSE IT IS NOT GOING TO HELP YOU WITH THAT DIRECT QUESTION, BUT IT WILL JUST SIMPLY TRY TO KEEP THE FOCUS WHERE OUR POLICY WOULD LIKE TO KEEP IT FOCUSED, OBVIOUSLY; UNCLASSIFIED

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FIRST, THAT WE THINK THAT THE NECESSITY IS FOR TWO THINGS TO HAPPEN: ONE, FOR LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY AND CONTROL TO BE EXTENDED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THAT COUNTRY, AND THAT THE INTEGRITY OF THOSE BORDERS BE MAINTAINED; SECOND, IN PARALLEL, THAT THE MAJOR EMPHASIS OF ALL THE PARTIES BE KEPT ON THE RESOLUTION OF THE LARGER ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE OVERALL MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. AND THAT IS WHERE WE INTEND TO FOCUS OUR LONG-RANGE EFFORTS AND OUR OVERALL OBJECTIVES.

Q. COULD I ASK YOU TO TRY TO GIVE US SOME ESTIMATE, IF YOU CAN, ON THE BEGIN TALKS NEXT WEEK, IN TERMS OF

WHAT YOU HAVE JUST SAID ABOUT OUR DESIRE, OR OUR SEEING THE NECESSITY FOR LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY BEING EXTENDED AND TO PARALLEL THAT, KEEPING THE EMPHASIS ON THE LARGE ISSUES?

HAS THE NATURE OF THE BEGIN VISIT NOW BEEN SHIFTED MORE FROM THE LARGER ISSUES TO THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION, IN THE SENSE THAT THERE WILL BE LESS DISCUSSION, LESS CHANCE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE LARGER ISSUES, AS A RESULT OF WHAT HAS INTERVENED IN THE LAST WEEK OR SO? CAN YOU GIVE US ANY ESTIMATE OR EVALUATION OF THAT?

MR. CARTER: LET ME FIRST SAY THAT I WOULD NOT TRY TO STRAIN YOUR CREDULITY OR MY CREDABILITY BY PRETENDING

THAT THE ISSUE OF SOUTHERN LEBANON WILL NOT BE ADDRESSED, ASSUMING NOTHING PARTICULARLY HAS HAPPENED, OR IN ANY CASE, EVEN IF SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED, WOULD NOT BE ADDRESSED IN THE VISIT.

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BUT LET ME SAY THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE MAJOR EMPHASIS THAT WE INTEND TO HAVE IN THESE TALKS IS GOING TO BE ON THE LARGER PEACE EFFORT IN THE MIDDLE EAST; A CONTINUATION OF A PROCESS WHICH HAS BEEN UNDERWAY NOW FOR SOME MONTHS, AND WHICH WAS TO BE THE FOCUS BEFORE THIS SET OF EVENTS OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS, OF MR. BEGIN'S VISIT HERE.

JUST TO REPEAT MYSELF, WE EXPECT THE TALKS TO BE CENTERED ON THE PEACE PROCESS, AND HOW TO MOVE THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD.

Q. DO YOU EXPECT THE LENGTH OF THE TALKS, IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT, TO BE GREATER AS A RESULT OF THIS, BECAUSE SOMETIMES A LOT OF THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN UP IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION, AND THEREFORE WE STILL WANT TO HAVE AS MUCH TIME TO DISCUSS THE LONG-TERM PROBLEMS, OR THE LENGTH OF TALKS WILL BE ABOUT THE SAME, AND THEREFORE THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION WOULD CUT INTO ANY EFFORTS AT ANY TIME DEVOTED TO THE BIGGER PROBLEMS? HOW IS THIS GOING TO WORK OUT?

MR. CARTER: I DON'T HAVE A TIME SCHEDULE. NOW, I DON'T KNOW THAT IT HAS CHANGED. I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THE "I DON'T KNOW," AS TO WHETHER IT HAS CHANGED.

I HAVE A FEELING THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE WILL BE

SOME ADDITIONS, OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER, TO THE OVERALL FRAMEWORK OF DISCUSSIONS. BUT I THINK THAT, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE ARE GOING TO SPEND THE GREAT BULK OF THE TIME DISCUSSING THE PEACE PROCESS ITSELF.

Q. THE TIMETABLE IS STILL THE SAME, IS IT?

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A. THE PROBLEM IS, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER A WORKING GROUP HAS COME FORWARD WITH A NEW TIMETABLE OR NOT. I DO NOT KNOW OF ANY CHANGE. I HAVE NOT SEEN ONE, AND I KNOW THAT HIS ITINERARY REMAINS UNCHANGED.

Q. DO YOU EXPECT THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON TO BE AT LEAST SETTLED, IN PRINCIPLE, BY THE TIME THE PRIME MINISTER COMES FOR TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT?

MR. CARTER: WELL, OBVIOUSLY, WE WOULD HOPE THAT IT WOULD BE SETTLED IN PRINCIPLE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. THAT IS MY HOPE; I HAVE NO WAY OF PROVIDING A PROJECTING ON THAT. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q. ARE YOU GOING TO GET THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO ARRIVE AT A RESOLUTION BY TUESDAY?

A. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A RESOLUTION, UNDER WHATEVER FORUM OR AEGIS IT MAY BE, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, AND THEREFORE THE ANSWER WOULD BE YES. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ONE BY THIS AFTERNOON, OR BY TOMORROW, OR THE NEXT DAY, OR AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN GET ONE.

Q. DO WE REGARD IT AS POSSIBLE TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS ON THE LARGE AREA ISSUES WHILE ISRAELI TROOPS ARE STILL IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. YES.

Q. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE EVENTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON HAVE DAMAGED THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS?

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A. I HESITATE TO SPECULATE ABOUT THAT. AGAIN, I AM NOT GOING TO TRY TO STRAIN ANYBODY'S SENSE OF INTELLIGENCE ON THIS. FIGHTING, TERRORISM, OR WHATEVER IT MAY BE, OBVIOUSLY ADDS TO THE BURDEN OF A PEACE PROCESS, SINCE THE PURPOSE OF THE PROCESS IS TO END BOTH OF THESE.

BUT I AM IN NO POSITION -- AND I MEAN THIS IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD -- TO SPEAK FOR THE OTHER PARTIES ON THIS, OR TO TRY TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF THE OVERALL EFFECT ON THE PEACE PROCESS. WHAT IT PROVES TO US QUITE FRANKLY -- THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS -- IS THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF MAKING PROGRESS ON THE PEACE PROCESS, OF GETTING A RESOLUTION, AND UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THERE IS SUCH A RESOLUTION, THE LIKELIHOOD IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF WHAT IS THE TRAGEDY FOR ALL CONCERNED.

Q. IF YOUR ANSWER WAS YES TO HANK, THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE BASED, PRESUMABLY, ON A CHECK WITH PRESIDENT SADAT.

A. YES. TELL ME THE QUESTION, SO I CAN KNOW WHY THE

PRESUMPTION IS.

Q. WELL, IF YOU CONTINUE THE PEACE PROCESS IN EFFECT WHILE ISRAELI FORCES REMAIN IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. YES. OBVIOUSLY, WE HAVE BEEN TALKING TO EVERYBODY, AND YES, IT IS OUR CONSIDERED JUDGMENT THAT THE PEACE PROCESS IS ONE WHICH WE INTEND TO CONTINUE, AND CAN CONTINUE.

Q. WELL, THAT "YOU CAN CONTINUE" IS ONE THING AND "THAT YOU CAN," MEANING THAT YOU HAVE THE AGREEMENT OF THE PARTIES TO CONTINUE THAT PROCESS --

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A. I DON'T HAVE SOME PHRASEOLOGY THAT CAME OUT OF CAIRO, BUT I NOTED A STATEMENT ON THIS, WHICH I THINK CERTAINLY DID NOT CLOSE THE DOOR ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS AT ALL.

Q. DO YOU MEAN AGREEMENT, OR DO YOU MEAN THE WILL IS THERE?

A. I MEAN THE WILL.

Q. THE SENSE OF WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS THE WILL, NOT THAT YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC AGREEMENT FROM SADAT?

A. NO, I THINK THE WILL IS THERE.

Q. A WILL IN EGYPT AND A WILL IN ISRAEL TO KEEP GOING?

A. I DO INDEED.

Q. DESPITE WHAT HAPPENED?

A. I DO, INDEED, YES.

Q. YOU WANT ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. I AM SORRY, I WANT WHO TO WITHDRAW?

A. ISRAEL, FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON.

A. WITHIN THEIR BORDERS.

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Q. TO THE ORIGINAL INTERNATIONAL BORDERS?

A. TO THE ORIGINAL INTERNATIONAL BORDERS OUTSIDE OF LEBANON.

Q. IS YOUR POSITION, IN ASKING ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON, SIMILAR TO THE POSITION OF ASKING ISRAEL TO APPLY 242 AND WITHDRAW FROM THE ARAB TERRITORY, OR BOTH OF THEM ARE DIFFERENT, AND THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON IS AN URGENT NECESSITY?

A. THE SITUATION IS CLEARLY DIFFERENT. I AM NOT GOING TO TRY TO DEFINE IT, BUT I THINK THAT THE SITUATION DEFINES IT PRETTY CLEARLY.

Q. IN THE CONVERSATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR DINITZ AND WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, HAVE YOU HAD AN INDICATION OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S FEELING ABOUT THE STATEMENT MADE YESTERDAY?

A. I AM SURE WE DO. I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO TYPIFY --

Q. ALL THE REPORTS FROM ISRAEL THAT I HAVE SEEN SAY THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES ARE RATHER SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE ABILITY TO PULL TOGETHER AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE THAT IS WORTH ANYTHING. HAS THIS BEEN CONVEYED TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT?

A. AGAIN, I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO SAY WHAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE TOLD US.

Q. LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY: HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH COUNTRIES THAT ARE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE FORCES TO THIS AREA?

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A. WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES, AND HAVE HAD, OBVIOUSLY, DIFFERENT REACTIONS FROM DIFFERENT PEOPLE. I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO SPECIFY WHETHER PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO PUT TROOPS IN OR NOT.

Q. DO YOU FEEL THAT BECAUSE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST WEEK THAT IT HAS BECOME MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE UNITED STATES TO TRY TO PERSUADE ISRAEL THAT 242 APPLIES TO ALL THREE FRONTS, INCLUDING THE WEST BANK?

A. I REALLY CAN'T SPECULATE ON THAT. I MEAN, WE ARE

GOING TO BE DISCUSSING THE ENTIRE QUESTION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WHEN HE GETS HERE, AND THERE IS NO POINT IN ME TRYING TO DISCUSS THAT FROM THIS PODIUM.

Q. WELL, LET ME ASK YOU A MORE DIRECT QUESTION, THEN. DOES THE UNITED STATES STILL STAND ON THE POSITION THAT IT WOULD BE A VERY SERIOUS BLOW, TO QUOTE THE PRESIDENT, TO THE PEACE PROCESS IF ISRAEL WERE TO ANNOUNCE THE APPLICABILITY OF 242 TO THE WEST BANK?

A. THERE IS NO CHANGE IN OUR POSITION, WHICH WE HAVE RATHER EXPLICITLY STATED.

Q. WEREN'T YOU SAYING BEFORE THAT ONE OF THE POSSIBLE CONFIGURATIONS UNDER DISCUSSION IS INCLUDING LEBANESE FORCES IN SOME SORT OF A MIXED FORCE?

A. YES, I WANT TO SAY THAT THAT IS A POSSIBILITY. THE TROUBLE IS, A LOT OF THOUGHTS HAVE BEEN ADVANCED AND THERE IS A LOT OF DISCUSSION ON THIS AND I DON'T WANT UNCLASSIFIED

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TO EVEN SUGGEST FOR A MINUTE THAT I AM GIVING YOU A HINT ABOUT WHAT THE OUTCOME WOULD BE.

Q. I UNDERSTAND THAT. THE REASON I ASK YOU IS, DO YOU WANT TO GIVE US A HINT, JUST FOR A MINUTE, THAT CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO A MIXED LEBANESE-ISRAELI, FORCE, OR ARE ISRAELI FORCES ON THAT SIDE OF THE BORDER TO KEEP THE PEACE TOTALLY OUT OF CONSIDERATION AT THIS POINT?

A. I KNOW OF NO CONSIDERATION OF THAT. BUT I AM JUST SIMPLY NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER; THAT QUESTION IS LIKE, AGAIN, THE QUESTION OF "WHAT TROOPS." I DON'T KNOW OF ANY CONSIDERATION OF IT. THAT IS ALL I CAN TELL YOU.

Q. I ASK BECAUSE ON OTHER FRONTS, THERE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED MIXED PATROLS -- PEACE-KEEPING PATROLS. THAT IS NOT UNDER CONSIDERATION?

A. I JUST DON'T KNOW OF ANY. I REALLY WANT THAT KEPT QUALIFIED, "I DO NOT KNOW OF ANY." THAT MEANS I DON'T KNOW.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION THAT THE DEFENSE MINISTER IS STILL PLANNING TO MAKE THIS TRIP WITH THE PRIME MINISTER? WHAT ABOUT THE FOREIGN MINISTER, ALSO?

MR. SHERMAN: I THINK THE DEFENSE MINISTER SAID EARLIER THAT HE WOULD NOT BE COMING. WE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK THAT.

Q. BECAUSE OF THE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES?

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MR. SHERMAN: BUT THE FOREIGN MINISTER WILL BE COMING DEFINITELY.

Q. SINCE THE TERRITORY IS OCCUPIED IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, ISN'T IT UP TO THE LEBANON GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE WHO SHOULD BE SENT?

A. I HAVE TRIED TO MAKE VERY CLEAR THAT THE DETERMINATION ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IN LEBANON IS OBVIOUSLY A MATTER FOR LEBANON TO HAVE THE SAY ON; YOU KNOW, THAT IS THEIR TERRITORY.

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Message Attributes

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